

Hindu Cremation Critique Poem

Fire starts to climb up, nearly touching the heavens.

The sound of crackling wood sounded like a death wail.

But what of the air that chokes and sighs?

When another body starts to turn to ashes and flies?

Smoke is present, and it is as black as only hopelessness is.

Possessing sorrow, yet polluting the weather.

Rivers that were once clear are now tainted.

There are memories of burnt ashes; there are memories of grief.

Would this be the way their memories can be honored?

Thus, feeding the flame, fueling dread?

By casting their ashes and polluting the streams,

Is it possible to actually transform sacred waters into the dreams of death?

It hears tradition and its lore, but does it ever look?

The forests cut down, the dying trees?

The breath of life, now heavy and gray

When have funeral pyres been burning day after day?

For sake of peace, we started burning the earth.

But what and to what? Other names, other people, and the future—what is worth it?

When the environment we live in, the air we breathe
Is turned into poison by the very rites that we contemplate and hold sacred?

Believe that people leave us to go to a better place,
But at the same time, let the living be happy?
Cornered both make a way for both to survive.
For in death that falls and in the coals that burn.
They are the constructs beneath which lies a truth we all must know.

Earth is not ours to burn and to betray.
To honor the dead, there must be a new way.
Let there be some cool-off period where passions cool down and flames die out.
And all the smoke clears.
Hear the dead and the living; let the earth be at rest.

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